

*An Exhortation to the Practice of
Godliness.*

IN A
LETTER
TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF A
COUNTRY-PARISH,
FROM THEIR
MINISTER:
WITH

Directions for reading the Holy Scriptures,
by a Table of Lessons for every Sunday in
the Year.

To which are added,

Some Portions selected from the *Singing
Psalms*, which may be profitably made use of,
on those or other Days, as Opportunity offers:

ALSO

Some *Forms of Prayer for Families*, and for the
more retired Devotion of the Closet.

L O N D O N :

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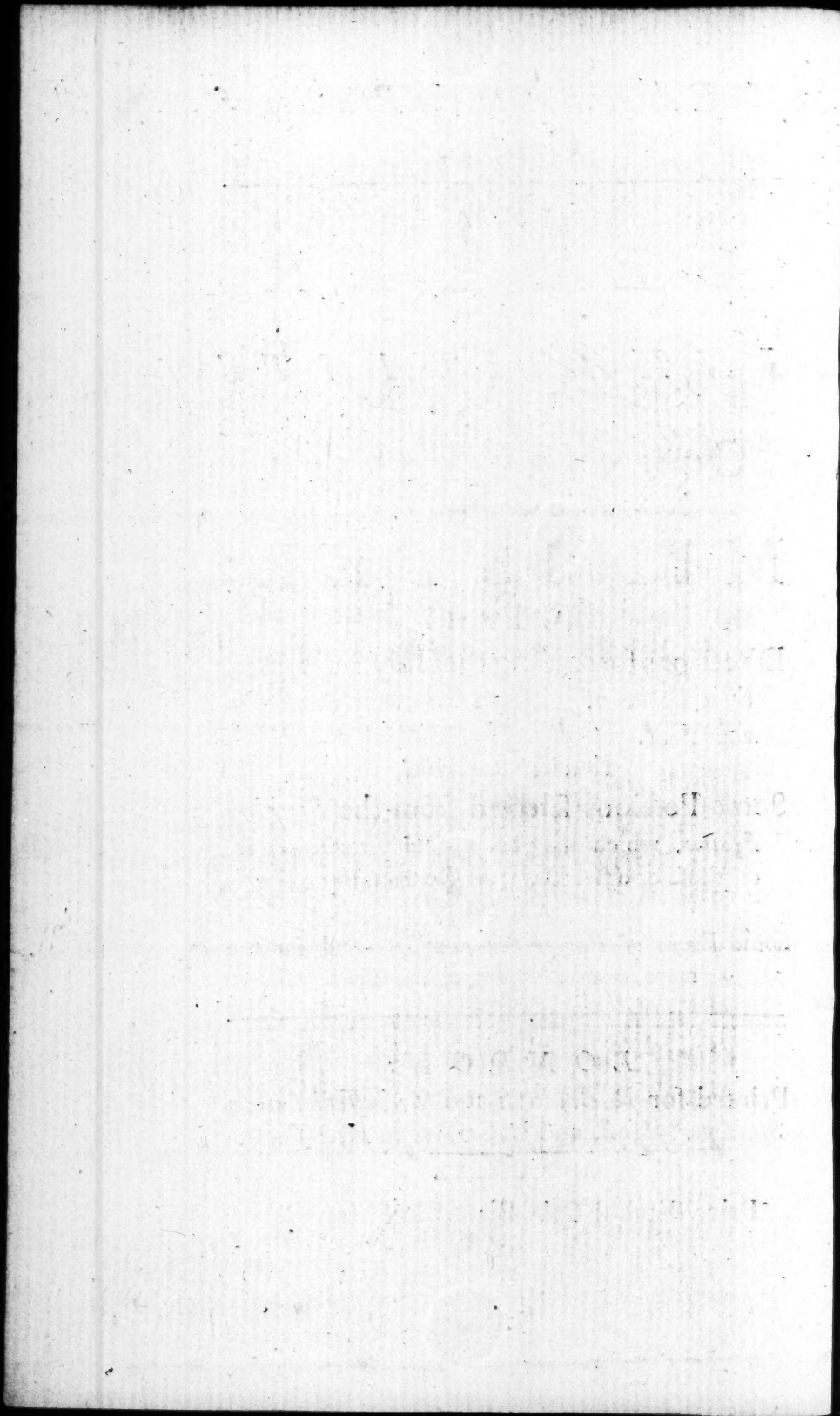
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TO THE
R E A D E R.

THE following Letter is published, as it was written, with a View to promote the great Ends of Vital and Practical Religion; which has almost always had the least, though it will always deserve the greatest Regard. The World has been furnished with many good Books of the same Kind; which may be thought to have rendered the Publication of the following Treatise unnecessary. But I desire it may be observed, that what others have done, has been, either in distinct and separate Treatises on the several Subjects here considered, or in those of a larger Size: Nor have I been able, after a long Search, to find any, wherein the same Things are brought under one View, in so narrow a

Compass. And whereas every Particular of Duty herein explained or recommended, must be allowed to be of the greatest Importance, I was willing that such Persons (especially those under my Care) who have little Leisure, and perhaps less Inclination, to read much, should, with a small Expence of Time, and with very little Pains, see, and be frequently reminded of the Things, which most nearly concern their eternal Salvation.

SOMETHING likewise, I think, has been omitted in the several Tracts of this Kind, which I have hitherto seen; I mean, Directions to those Parts of holy Scripture, which may be read in Families with most Profit: Which Defect I have endeavoured to supply, by a Table of Lessons annexed, containing some Portions of Scripture, placed under each Sunday in the Year; by reading which in the Method proposed, the whole of the Old and New Testament, in those Parts which I apprehend are of most general Concernment to be known, and well remembered, will

will be read in the Compass of a Year, and nothing, I trust, be wanting for the Information of the Faith, or Direction of the Practice of those to whom I write; who, I desire it may be considered, are the Unlearned. For which Reason those Parts of Scripture are omitted, which are of more difficult Interpretation; such also as relate to particular Controversies, now at an End, and not likely to be revived; and those which were written on special Occasions, and such as were peculiar to the Times wherein they were published; and cannot therefore be said to be of such general Use, as other Parts which are adapted to all Times and Seasons. The Table of Lessons placed before our Liturgy, was designed for the Use of Congregations consisting of a mixt Assembly of the Learned and Unlearned; and therein a greater Latitude is taken, Regard being paid to the Capacities of each. But, whereas I write to such who are supposed to have had but small Advantages of Education, I have recommended those Parts only of the holy Scriptures to be read by them, as may be presumed:

presumed to be within the Reach of their Apprehensions.

BY placing select Portions of Scripture under the several Sundays of the Year, I would not be thought to suggest, that the Bible is only to be read upon those Days, or that the whole is not of Use: But my Design therein is, to point out a Method of going through those Parts of that sacred Book which I conceive to be of the greatest Importance, and most easily understood by the common People, and a Method of doing this in some reasonable Time. Therefore when such Parts as are placed under any Sunday cannot, through some particular Emergency, be all read on that Sunday, what was then omitted, may be read at some other Time within that Week.

MANY Hours usually loitered away, especially in the long Winter-Evenings, would be thus very profitably employed: For nothing will be more subservient to those Purposes of Piety, which I pray God I may always be found endeavouring to promote, than such a Knowledge of the Will of God,
and

P R E F A C E. iv

and such Incitements to obey it, as will hereby be gained.

IT may perhaps be thought, that some Chapters in the Table of Lessons might have been omitted, as too much out of the Reach of the Unlearned, to whose Use I have professed my Design of accommodating, as much as possible, the whole of what is here offered. In answer to which, I have only to observe, that in those Chapters, wherein there are found some Passages which may well be presumed to exceed the Capacities of the Unlearned, there are, if I mistake not, others of great Use intermixt, which could not easily be separated from them, and which are of no very difficult Interpretation, to those who read the Scriptures with any due Care. Particularly many Places in the Prophets, which have a Vail* of some Obscurity over them, when read in the Old Testament only, will appear properly illustrated by the Account given of their Completion in the New. And thus as one

* — For until this Day remaineth the same Vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which Vail is done away in Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 14.

Testament

Testament will give Light and Support to the other, the Consequence, it may be presumed, will be, that the perceiving hereof, will tend very much to confirm the the Reader's Faith in Both.

DURING my Attendance on the Duties of a large and laborious Cure, at a Distance from my Parishioners, I could not dispense with my Obligations of having them much, and frequently in my Thoughts, and then formed a Design of making them a Present of something like the following Advices; which, as it has pleased God to give me Leisure to digest into some Order and Method, I thought I could not employ myself better, or more usefully to their Service, than in so doing; hoping at the same Time they may, by the Blessing of God, be of more general Use.

IT will give me great Pleasure, if the Failures discernable in executing my Design, should excite some other Persons of greater Abilities so to labour in this good Work, that a Spirit of true Piety may be revived, and prosper among us.

A L E T-

A
LETTER
TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF A
COUNTRY-PARISH.

My Friends and Parishioners,



ALTHOUGH I am at this Time
at a considerable Distance from you,
I am nevertheless very desirous of
being serviceable to you in the best
Manner I am able, not only by
the *Person* to whom I have committed, in my
Absence, the Care of your spiritual Concerns,
but by doing Something Myself, as your *Pastor*,
and all that my present Situation will allow, for
the Good of your Souls. Could I be assured, that
what I am now about to lay before you, in the
Way of Instruction and Exhortation, would prove
B

2 *Of Godliness in general.*

only a *Repetition* of those Admonitions which you have often received in your Attendance at your *Parish-Church*, I should not thereby be discouraged from my present Attempt to do you Service; there being *few*, I might say, *none* of us, who do not want frequently to be reminded of the Instructions we have received, and to be exhorted to a more careful Regard to our Duty, that our *Practice* may keep Pace with our *Knowledge*. To this End, I determined with Myself to write to you on the Subject of *Piety*, or *Godliness*, which is a Concern of the greatest Importance; since it is the Foundation and the Source of every thing which can be called *True Religion*, and will prove the best Guide and Security to every Virtue.

PERMIT me therefore to remind you, wherein the true Nature of Godliness consists,—to what Behaviour it directs us,—and how we may most effectually be excited to the Practice of it.

As to the Nature of Godliness; *Of Godliness in general.* it should always be remembered, that it consists in such Apprehensions of our Maker as are suitable to his Divine Perfections, and in such outward Behaviour as is agreeable to such Apprehensions.

Now, in order to conceive of God suitably to his Divine Character, we ought constantly to consider ourselves as is Creatures, that is, the Work of his Hands, and as indebted to Him for all the good Things we enjoy. To Him, we should always remember, we owe that Life which we now live, together with all it's appendant Blessings,

Blessings, and the Expectations of that Everlasting Life which we are encouraged to hope for in the Kingdom of Heaven, through the Merits and Mediation of *Jesus Christ* our Redeemer. Such Apprehensions as these will habituate our Minds to the Reverence and Love of God, and have a Tendency to produce all the proper Acts and genuine Effects of Piety in our outward Behaviour and Practice.

As *first*, A most certain and immediate Effect and Consequence of *Of Prayer*, these inward Sentiments of Love and Reverence towards our Maker, will be our frequent offering up our *Prayers* unto Him. This will appear to be a most becoming Proof, and a direct Consequence of the Persuasion we are now supposed to have, that it is *He* who supplies all our Wants, continues to us all the Blessings we enjoy, and that on *His* Favour our Eternal Happiness wholly depends. So that if a proper Foundation be laid in just and right Apprehensions of God, Prayer will be one of the first and most necessary Superstructures.

I TAKE the Word *Prayer* here, in it's largest, most comprehensive Sense; as signifying, our *Adoration* of the Divine Majesty,—the humble *Confession* of our Sins,—*Supplications* for the Things we stand in Need of,—and *thankful Expressions* also of the Sense we have of God's Mercies to us; to each of which we are obliged by the Duty of Prayer, which is no less our *Privilege* than our *Duty*. Prayer may well be called our *Privilege*;

it being a mighty Favour, that we, who by our Sins have rendered ourselves so unworthy to appear in the Presence of God, should yet be permitted to lay our Complaints before Him, or to offer the Sacrifice of Praise unto Him. But it has pleased Almighty God to make each of these our *Duty*; both to ask of Him those Things which we stand in Need of, and to express the Sense we have of his Blessings, in Praises and Thanksgivings; and this both in *Publick* and *Private*. For as we have our publick and private Wants, and Blessings both of a private and publick Kind, it is no less than highly reasonable, that we should use both private and publick Prayer and Thanksgiving.

HENCE it is, that our Blessed *Of private or* Saviour has appointed in his Gospel *secret Prayer.* private or secret Prayer; having commanded us to retire to our *Closets*, in order to pray unto our *Heavenly Father*, who seeth in *secret*, Matth. vi. 6: That so we might employ our Souls in Acts of Faith with respect to these momentous Truths,—that Almighty God is present in all Places,—is a Witness of our most secret Actions, and—that nothing can be hid from his Sight and Knowledge: The constant Remembrance whereof will certainly prove a most effectual Incitement to Holy Living, and be a powerful Restraint from the Commission of any Sin, how privately soever it may appear possible to be committed.

I. THIS then may, in the *first* Place, very justly recommend the frequent Exercise of private Devotion,

Devotion, as we shall hereby contract a quick and lively Sense of God's continual Presence with us; which cannot fail of being a great Preservative of our Innocence, under the Temptations to every Kind of Transgression to which we are exposed.

2. A *second* Advantage of private, or secret Prayer, will be this: We shall hereby bring our *Sincerity* to the Test, as to the Regard we have, or presume we have, to Religion; which having, for the most Part, *temporal Profit* of some Kind or other attending it, it may be no easy Matter, in any other Way, to make a sure Judgment, whether the Practice of many Things which Religion enjoins, proceeds from our *sincere Affection* thereto as religious Duties, and not principally from Views of worldly Profit, or other Advantages, usually the Consequence of such Practice or Behaviour. The just and the merciful Man, for Instance, may expect to be confided in, and beloved; the sober and temperate, by their Sobriety and Temperance, are in the ready and most likely Way to thrive and get forward in the World; and those who refrain from Evil-speaking, and follow Peace with all Men, are generally rendered safe from the mischievous Contentions into which those of a contrary Character often fall. And as we are very apt to be partial in our own Favour, by placing that to the Account of our *Virtue*, which may proceed from a *lower, less worthy Cause*, so we may not be very competent Judges, whether a Regard to the Divine Authority, which enjoins these Duties, is indeed the chief Motive with us

to their Observance, and not rather, a Regard to our temporal Interest or Welfare; which, we well know, is of great Weight in determining Mankind in their Manner of behaving; but which is a Motive to Action, however *unblameable in itself*, not of the *religious* Kind. Whereas, with respect to the Duty of private or secret Prayer, we may be assured with the most absolute Certainty, that nothing but a Regard to the Authority of God enjoining it, and the declared Acceptableness of it to his Divine Majesty, engages us therein. And frequent Returns thereof will of Course beget an habitual Regard to the same Divine Authority, in the Practice of all the other Duties of our Holy Religion.

3. ANOTHER Recommendation of this Duty may well be derived from the Expectation we may justly have, that it will prove, in the needful Time of Trouble, a singular Relief to our Minds oppressed with Cares or Sorrows, to which this Life is frequently exposed. *I poured out my Complaint before God; I shewed before Him my Trouble, says the Psalmist, [Ps. cxlii. 2.]* whose only Refuge, in those perilous Streights to which he was often reduced, was to the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, in these his private Devotions; wherein he found a large Account in the Consolations he then received. For though in the opening of his Grievs at the Throne of Grace, he uttered those mournful Words, "*My Flesh and my Heart faileth;*" yet he was immediately made able to say, "*but God is the Strength of my Heart*"
 " and

"and my Portion for ever." Ps. lxxiii. 26. The Power, the Goodness, the Wisdom, and Justice of God, of which he makes such frequent Mention in his Devotions, were the Stay and Support of his Mind; and strengthened his Persuasion, that the faithful Suppliant should find an happy End of his Troubles;—that nothing should, in the Event of Things, hurt those who are Followers of that which is good; and—that *all Things*, Things adverse, as well as those which are prosperous, *should work together for Good to them who love God*, and make him the Strength of their Confidence.

No one can read the *Psalms* of *David*, without observing, that they are, many of them, the pious Breathings in *private Prayer* of a Soul in all the Distress which can well be conceived; nor without seeing the good Effects of his thus unburthening his Mind. And how great a Solace and Refreshment may be had, in Troubles of every Sort, from the like Recourse unto God in Prayer, his Saints and Servants have in all Ages had their Experience.

4. ONCE more, Let it not be reckoned among the least Advantages accruing from a frequent Exercise of *private Devotion*, that we shall hereby become well prepared for the proper Performance of *publick Prayer*, which is certainly our Duty; but can hardly be expected to be performed as it ought, unless our *private Devotions* prepare our Minds for those which we are obliged likewise to offer up unto God, together with our
Fellow-

Of publick
Prayer.

Fellow-Creatures. For I believe, I shall not transgress the Bounds of Truth or Charity, in saying, that those who never pray in *Private*, will hardly ever do it as they ought in *Publick*, either with their Families, or in the more general Assemblies for publick Worship; where it is Matter of much Concern, to see many behave, in some Congregations, in such a Manner as too plainly discovers, they are very much Strangers to the Work in which they are engaged. The cold Indifference which appears on the Faces of some;—the Silence of others, when they should give some audible Proof of their fervent Desire to obtain what is prayed for, by making such *Responses* as are expected from them;—the indulging themselves, it may be, in the Impertinencies of idle Chat, to the Disturbance of others who are better disposed, and better employed;—or in shewing their good Breeding and Politeness, as it is falsely deemed, in being watchful to catch, or pay the Compliments of civil Respect, when they should be actually engaged with others in paying their Homage to their Great Creator;—or in Sleeping, when all the Powers of their Minds should be awake, and attentive to the great Business which is then transacting between God and their Souls;—each of these Kinds of Misbehaviour affords a lamentable Proof, that such Persons, such indevout Worshippers, seldom or never make a Conscience of praying in *Private*: If they did, their Behaviour, when assembled with others, would certainly be more decent and devout.

FOR

FOR Prevention of your falling into these or the like Indecencies, or your continuing in them, and to persuade you to a more religious and becoming Deportment, suffer me to remind you of the *End* or *Design* of publick Prayer, and of the Blessings we may expect from Behaving therein as we ought.

1st, As to End or Design of the Appointment of *publick* Worship, we can make no Doubt of it's being commended, in order to the keeping us continually mindful of these great Truths,—that Almighty God is the Parent of Mankind, the Governor of the Universe, and that his Mercy is over all his Works ;—that our Behaviour in our publick as well as private Capacity, when we are assembled with, and when separated from others, is under his continual Inspection ; and,—that as Mankind are associated together, in the lesser and larger Communities, of *Families*, *States*, and *Kingdoms*, for the Uses of civil Life, they ought to assemble also together at his *Church*, and *People*, for the much greater Ends of Piety and Devotion. And,

2^{dly}, As to the good Effects or Blessings which may be expected from such Assemblies for publick Worship, they are very great. For who that calls himself a Christian, and thinks himself worthy of that Name, can wilfully or negligently omit finding Opportunities of joining in those Acts of Worship, to which our Saviour has given so great Encouragement as to promise, that *where two or three are gathered together in His Name,*
there

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there He is in the Midst of them? Matth. xviii. 20. What greater Testimony could be given of the Approbation of Heaven? What greater Pledge of God's Intention to reward us with those good Things which make His Presence a Blessing to us, than is hereby given to those who so assemble for His Worship, as to behave suitably to the Majesty of that Presence they are in, and to the Importance of that Work in which they are then employed?

It deserves Notice, that it was to secure the regular Returns of publick Worship, and the more decent as well as more general Performance of it, that the *Sabbath* was appointed, and the *keeping it holy* so strictly enjoined.

ON the pious Observation of the *Of keeping the Sabbath* the Religion of Mankind does so evidently depend, that I cannot avoid earnestly entreating you so to acquit yourselves therein, as it may be made appear to be your Duty to do.

To which Purpose I observe, that if some have strained the keeping of the *Sabbath* beyond the Intention of the *Commandment*, many more, it is certain, fall vastly short of what may be justly expected from them in Obedience thereto. So that it may be of Use to consider seriously, what is enjoined in the Command of *Keeping that Day Holy*.

You cannot then, I will take it for granted, allow yourselves to spend it in bodily Labour, as the other six Days of the Week. For the keeping

Of the Observation of the Sabbath. 11

keeping any Portion of Time, or any Thing else *holy*, is setting apart for, or imploying it in, some *religious* Uses, or Services. To use this Day as a *common Day*, is therefore perfectly contrary to every Thing which can be meant by keeping it *holy*.

BUT a great Number of Offenders there are against this Precept, who do something in Compliance therewith, but not enough to satisfy the Obligations they are under from thence. They go to Church, and so far do well, on this Day: But herein they are very blameable, in that they behave afterwards as if they thought themselves at full Liberty to do as they please, provided they only abstain from bodily Labour.

THEIR Mistake herein will appear, if we consider the *Morality* or *Reason* of this Precept, which constitutes it's Obligation to us Christians. Now, as Rest from bodily Labour on this Day was enjoined, that we might on the Sabbath be more at Liberty to attend to the Concerns of our Souls, to worship God, and meditate on his Works of Creation and Providence; so it cannot be denied, that every Thing which equally, or in the same Degree as bodily Labour, indisposes us for the Discharge of religious Offices on this Day, may justly be esteemed as forbidden thereon. By this, which is a very equitable Rule of interpreting this Precept, the assembling for publick Diversions at *Wakes* on the *Lord's Day*,—the taking *Journeys* thereon, without apparent Necessity for so doing,—the frequenting publick *Tipling Houses*, or converting

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converting our own Houses into little less,—the transacting worldly Affairs thereon in making *Bargains*; all such Practices, if we would judge of the Obligation of this Precept by the End or Design thereof, would be found Transgressions of it.

I do not say, that you must be *continually* on this Day praying, or hearing Sermons, or reading the Word of God, or allow nothing to enter your Minds thereon, which is not of the religious Kind. I am persuaded, that the Mind of Man will not bear a constant, uninterrupted Exercise of it's Faculties on religious Subjects, or on any Subjects, even for a Day. Relaxation, changing the Subject of our Thoughts, suffering our Souls sometimes to unbend themselves, is necessary, by the very Constitution of our Nature, in this our frail and imperfect State: And what is necessary of this Kind is allowed to be made use of, in that merciful Declaration of our Saviour, *The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*: [Mark ii. 27.] Which is therefore to be observed as a *Means* to an *End*, not as if it was itself the *End* of it's Appointment. For there is no Excess can be committed in those Things which are commanded for their own Sake, as in *Justice, Truth, and the like*: Whereas, with respect to the Observation of the *Sabbath*, it is evident, our Lord was, at the Time He made the merciful Declaration just mentioned, reproving the *Pharisees* for a superstitious Regard thereto, as insisting on more than was really commanded,
or

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or expected. From our Saviour's Reproof of the *Pharisees* therefore, on the foregoing Occasion, we may receive this Instruction; That neither the Observation of the Sabbath, nor any other of the Means of making us good, and thereby happy, can, if rightly understood, turn to the Oppression of our Minds, by too constant a Weight of Care, too intense a Degree of Thoughtfulness, even that of the religious Kind not excepted. If any therefore neglect those *outward Refreshments*, that are necessary for the Support of their Bodies, as well as their Souls, on this Day, and suppose themselves obliged thereto by the Command of *keeping it holy*, they herein mistake their Duty.

BUT there is, I am persuaded, a much greater Occasion to exhort you to beware of the Offences in the *contrary Extream*; there being Multitudes who behave in such a Manner on the Sabbath, as can no Ways consist with a religious Observation of it; which yet is the very Thing enjoined in the Command of *keeping it holy*.

IN order then to *keep the Sabbath holy*, fail not of remembering always your Obligations of *assembling* with others, on this Day for the publick Worship of God. Affect not to frame *Excuses* for not attending thereon. Let nothing be your Hindrance, but unavoidable *Necessity* with respect to *yourselves*, or some Work of *Charity* to your *Neighbour*, which will not admit of any Delay. And when you are about to enter the House of God, bethink yourselves, whither you are going, —what Behaviour is then required of you, and—

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what

Of the Observation of the Sabbath.

what may afterwards be expected from you. Approach the Sanctuary of God with *Reverence*: For if you should come into the *Church* with the same Negligence of Behaviour, or with the like Set of Thoughts, as when you enter your *Barns* or *Stables*, it is by no Means probable you will behave afterwards in a Manner becoming the Dignity and Purity of that Being you profess there to worship. *I will come into thy House in the Multitude of thy Mercy*, said the *Psalmist*, and in thy Fear will I worship toward thy holy Temple. Pf. v. 7. And many such Ejaculations may be found in that excellent Treasure of Devotion which he has brought together in his Book of *Psalms*; some or other of which, such as you most approve, may be offered up at your coming into Church, as a fit Preparation for the proper Discharge of those Acts of publick Worship in which you come to engage.

AND as a Means of fixing your Attention to each Part of the *Service* appointed by the *Church*, let me recommend your using the *Gestures* commanded. *Kneel* or *stand up* as directed; and always go along with the *Minister* who officiates, in the constant Use of your *Common-Prayer Books* and *Bibles*. Never omit making your Responses *audibly*, where it is ordered; and in the *Psalms* make an *open Recital* of those Verses which are your Share or Part therein. And where you are not permitted to speak any thing openly or aloud, as in the Chapters and most of the Prayers, yet you will then be usefully employed in reading

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reading to yourselves what the Minister, and he only, is directed to pronounce with an *audible Voice*. And what you do herein yourselves, you should take Care, that all of your *Families*, who can read, may do likewise; which you will find of much Use to them, in improving them in their Reading, and of great Advantage to yourselves and them in other Respects. For you will thus give yourselves, and be a Means of giving your Families, an actual Concern in, and a close Attention to, every Part of Divine Service, the *Psalms*, the *Lessons*, and the *Prayers*; and in particular, with respect to the latter, the *Prayers*, you will hereby be made always ready to express your Assent to the Petitions offered up by the Minister, and your fervent Desire of obtaining what is therein prayed for, by saying, AMEN, in the close of each Prayer: Thus likewise those Rovings of the Mind, those wandering Thoughts, which are too apt to lead us from what we should be doing, or thinking on at those solemn Times, will in a great Measure be prevented, and no Occasion given for Complaints of that Heaviness and Coldness in Devotion, which have been ascribed to the very Nature of *Forms of Prayer*, tho' they are owing wholly to a negligent and inattentive Use of them. For Prevention whereof, be ever mindful, that as at the Times of Divine Worship, we enter professedly into the immediate Presence of the great God of Heaven and Earth, so to demean ourselves with any *Carelessness or Irreverence* before so great

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a Majesty, at the very Time we are making our Addresses unto him, has something so unaccountable in it, that our Prayers *thus offered* cannot, one would think, be deemed by any a *reasonable Service*. And yet, who has not heard Confession of Sins, and Intercessions for Pardon, made unto God with such *Coldness* and *Indifference*, as to afford Room for thinking, that Sin, in the Account of those who *so* confess it, is no great Evil; and that the Sinner *thus* confessing it, in Behalf of himself and others, has very little Apprehension of it's standing in much Need of Forgiveness? To prevent such gross Misbehaviour in our Addresses to the Throne of Grace, let us by frequent Reflections on the Majesty of that God whom we then invoke,—on our own Unworthiness and manifold Transgressions,—on the Importance of the Things we pray for to our present and future Happiness, and—the Greatness of those Obligations we are continually under to the Divine Bounty;—by frequent Reflections hereon, I say, let us *habituate* our Minds to the most awful Apprehensions of that infinite and most adorable Being to whom we pray. Let us be careful, that our *Voice* and our *Gesture* may correspond to the Solemnity of that great Concern which is then transacting between God and our Souls. And those in particular, who preside or officiate in publick Devotions, should make it their *especial Care*, to become Examples to others of a decent Attention and Fervency; it undoubtedly deserving
the

the sharpest Reproof and Censure, to behave otherwise on such Occasions*.

* THE very pious Mr *George Herbert*, in his COUNTRY PARSON, (which was wrote above an hundred Years ago) representing the *Parson praying*, has this Passage, which I take Leave to transcribe at Length, viz. — “ That being first affected himself, he may
“ affect also his People, knowing that no Sermon
“ moves them so much to Reverence, which they for-
“ get again; when they come to pray, as a devout
“ Behaviour in the very Act of praying. Accordingly
“ his Voice is humble, his Words treatable, — and
“ slow; yet not so slow neither, as to let the Fer-
“ vency of the Suppliant hang and die between
“ speaking, but with a grave Liveliness, between Fear
“ and Zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his
“ Duty. Besides his Example, he having often in-
“ structed his People how to carry themselves in Di-
“ vine Service, exacts from them all possible Reve-
“ rence, by no Means enduring either talking, or
“ sleeping, or gazing, or leaning, or half-kneeling;
“ or any undutiful Behaviour in them, but causing
“ them, when they sit, or stand, or kneel, to do all
“ in a streight and steady Posture, as attending to
“ what is done in the Church, and every one, Man
“ and Child, answering aloud both, Amen, and all
“ other Answers, which are on the Clerks and Peoples
“ Part to answer; which Answers also are to be done
“ not in a huddling or slubbering Fashion, gaping, or
“ scratching the Head, or spitting even in the Midst
“ of their Answer, but gently and pausably, thinking
“ what they say.”

Of bearing Sermons. WE are now come to that Part of the Service, when the Minister proceeds to instruct the Congregation in the Laws of God, to preach his Word, and to exhort you to walk worthy of that holy *Vocation wherewith ye are called.*

To an Exhortation and Instruction of this Kind, much Attention is certainly due: For the Word of God, from whence the Subject of the Preacher's Discourse is taken, is said to be *able to save your Souls.* [Jam. i. 21.] He must therefore discharge this Part of his Office exceedingly ill, or the Hearers be greatly wanting in what may justly be expected from them, if much Benefit is not received from his Exposition of the Doctrines of Scripture, and from his Persuasions to obey the Precepts of it. If the Seed sown should not have it's expected Encrease, I hope the Want of Diligence and Discretion in your *Minister* will not be the Occasion thereof. And that it may not proceed from the Negligence and Inattention of the *Hearers*, consider, that the Motives to Attention are in this Case many: That to listen to Instruction, is the Way to gain Knowledge,—that the Subjects or Matters treated on are of great Importance,—that the End or Purpose of preaching is no less than this, that you may be directed in the Way of Salvation; which must necessarily be deemed, by all who make any due Estimate of Things, a Matter of the greatest Concernment in the World.

To have the Snares of Satan discovered, the Evil of Sin laid open, the Miseries which will overtake every Sinner who goeth on still in his Wickedness, laid before you; and proved to be the certain and tremendous Consequences of a Life that issues in Impenitency, (which, in the Course of our preaching, is what we are employed in giving you Proof of) these Things must needs, to every considerate Person, appear to be of the *greatest Moment* to our Happiness. And therefore to *sleep, or talk away*, this Season of Instruction,—to appear to be, or really to be, *wholly unaffected* with Discourses of this Kind, is a sad Proof, that the Souls of such Persons are immersed in Sensuality, lost to a Sense of their true Interest, and in a very lamentable Condition;—in that Condition which the Apostle describes by being *dead in Trespasses and Sins*: From which the same Apostle endeavours to rouse all such lethargick Sinners, by calling aloud, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light*: Eph. v. 14. And when this becomes their Case, to be thus awakened and enlightened, they will then be capable of discerning, and be enamoured with the *Beauties of Holiness*;—which it is an essential Part also of the Preacher's Business to describe, as it is likewise to set forth the Rewards of well-doing, as far as our Words and our Language will enable us. Perfect Descriptions of those Rewards we are indeed no Ways able to give: But so much we can discover thereof, and so represent them, as to make it manifest to every attentive Hearer, that they are infinitely

infinitely desirable; most deserving of that patient Continuance in the Ways of Holiness, and Obedience to the Will of God, which is made necessary, in order to render us meet to receive so great a Recompence, so exceeding great a Reward as the *Glories of Heaven*. And should any Thing be allowed to draw off your Attention from Concerns of so great Weight and Moment? Every Thing, assuredly, relating to this Life,—the Business, the Cares, and the Pleasures thereof, are as nothing, and should be accounted as nothing, compared with these Things which are the usual Subjects of Sermons, and of those Sermons, I doubt not, at which you are, or should be present on *every Lord's Day*, unless prevented by some great Necessity.

AND that the Word preached may profit you, by being *mixed with Faith*, (Heb. iv. 2.) let it be your Prayer unto God, that He would open your Eyes, that you may see the *wondrous Things of His Law*; and that He would so incline your Hearts, by the Influence of His holy Spirit, that you may be *Doers of the Word*, and not *Hearers only*, *deceiving your own selves*; that you may not be as the Man whom St James describes, who *beholdeth his natural Face in a Glass*; and going his Way, straightway forgetteth what Manner of Man he was. Jam. i. 22, 23, 24.

To avoid so useless, so fruitless a Kind of hearing; when you have been at Church, and are returned to your own Houses, allow yourselves some Time afterwards, in the Remainder of the Day, for

for a proper Reflection on such Parts of your Duty as you have heard explained to you: That the *Seed sown* may not be like that in the Parable, which is said to have been *sown on stony Places, where there was no Depth of Earth, or by the Way-side, where the Fowls of the Air came and devoured it up.* Mark iv. 4, 5. In which Parable our Saviour describes the Case of all inconsiderate Hearers of his Word,—of those who lay nothing to Heart of what they have heard,—make no Comparison between the Description given in the Scriptures of a Christian, and their own State and Condition,—between their Manner of Life and the Laws of God, which should be the Rule of their Behaviour. Preaching to such Persons, is compared to sowing Seed on the Surface of that Ground which has never been opened to receive it. *These, as our Saviour expresses it, have no Root in themselves:* How then can the Seed sown bring forth the Fruits of Holiness? When thus it is received, or thus suffered to lie neglected, what Expectations can be had of any Profit, or Increase from it?

AND that your whole Behaviour in the Week following may be under the Influence of religious Sentiments, I must not omit being very earnest in persuading you to worship God daily with your *Families*. For every Family is to be considered as a distinct Society, or Community, subject to the same common Want of the Blessings of God's Providence. The Members of a Family have

*Of Family-
Worship.*

have one common Interest in the Mercies vouchsafed them, and their Wants in common with each other; and as a Body thus united, and dependent on the Providence of God, they have no Way of making their Acknowledgments for the Blessings they receive, or of seeking the Relief of their Wants from Heaven, but by joining together in Prayers and Thanksgivings: Wherein consists that Worship, which I would gladly prove in some Measure an Instrument of introducing, in those Families where it is neglected. For as I am fully persuaded of your Duty in this particular, so I could name many Advantages which may be expected from your Compliance with it; and many great Mischiefs which do certainly grow out of that Disuse of *Family-Worship* which is Matter of too just, and too general a Complaint. Sure I am, there must be a sensible and continual Decay of Religion in those Families wherein God is not thus worshipped;—that the Concerns of Eternity take up but very little Room in the Heads and Hearts of those *Parents* or *Masters*; who can wholly neglect the calling together their Households, to pay this Debt to Providence *daily*;—and that the Worship of God in our *Churches* can never be expected to be performed as it ought, till it thus has it's regular, stated Returns in *our own Houses*.

—HEREON will greatly depend the Dutifulness of Children to their Parents, and the Fidelity of Servants to their Masters;—they will hereby learn to behave as they ought in their respective Stations,
from

from Principles of Religion, and Conscience daily awakened;—they will fear to be guilty of Disobedience to your just Commands, or of giving you any just Cause of Offence, from a Regard to a higher and greater Authority than any on Earth, even that of the *great Parent of Mankind*, the *Lord and Master* of us all, and the *Rewarder of every one according to his Works*.

THAT you might not want any needful Helps for the Exercise of *Family Devotion*, I long ago sent you some *Forms of Prayer* for such Occasions*: And to shew how much I desire your spiritual Improvement in this Part of your Duty, I have at this Time added hereto something of the like Kind, composed more particularly for your Use, and suited, I hope, to your Circumstances and Condition in Life; that from a Variety of Helps of this Sort, you might have the more Choice, and less Room for Excuse, in neglecting what so nearly concerns the Good of your Souls.

* AMONG the many useful Books of this Kind, there is none that I more earnestly recommend to your Perusal, than that published by a very worthy Prelate, the present Bishop of *London*, intitled, *FAMILY DEVOTION*. The *Exhortation* his Lordship there gives to Family Prayer, is drawn up with such a Spirit of Piety, and Force of Reason, that it can scarce fail of making strong Impressions on the Minds of those, who are not utterly lost to all Sense of Religion.

This Tract is printed for *M. Downing* in *Bartholomew-Close*, near *West-Smithfield*. Price Fourpence.

AND

AND if out of that *Collection* I also sent you from the *singing Psalms*, to be used in the publick Service of the Church, you would make Choice of some whose Tunes may with most Ease be learnt, and have them sung in your Families as Time and Opportunity may serve for that Purpose, especially at the Seasons of Prayer, it would be very useful and commendable. A *List* of this Kind you will find at the End of these Papers: And remember, that St *Paul* and St *James* do both recommend this Practice in such Terms as must needs be interpreted a strict Injunction, where there is any Skill or Ability of making use thereof. *Col. iii. 16. Jam. v. 13.*

IN the *List* of *Psalms* just mentioned, no other *Version* is referred to, but that of *Sternhold* and *Hopkins*; as none other is generally bound up with our *Bibles* or *Common-Prayer Books*: In some late Editions of which *Version* as several Alterations have been made for the better, those Editions are undoubtedly to be preferred to the more ancient ones, wherein the Language is grown, through Length of Time, in many Places *uncouth* and *obsolete*. The several Portions I have extracted are, I think, the best Parts thereof; and as such, they are recommended to the Use of those who are not possessed of any better or more elegant *Version*.

IT cannot well be expressed, how much Benefit would arise from so heavenly an Exercise as *Psalmody*, performed with *Decency* and *Devotion*. To every devout Mind it is certainly attended with that Delight of which the Soul of Man cannot fail

fail of being joyfully conscous, when it is thus raised to a Communion and Fellowship with those blessed Spirits above, whose happy Employment it is to be *ever praising* their great Creator. A very little Time, in each Day, will serve for this holy Exercise of Prayer and Thanksgiving, in your Families; so very little, that, I hope, no Objection will be made against it on that Account.

BUT perhaps this may be charged by others, as an Affectation of being thought more righteous and devout than your Neighbours; and a *false Shame* may seize you of appearing *singularly good and pious*. I am no Advocate for, but an Enemy indeed to *Appearances*, where there is no *Reality* to support them. But where the Reality of being good, or doing well, cannot subsist without Appearances, there Appearances should be of no such Account with us, as to discourage any good Performances. In Truth, to be ashamed of being *really* good, lest we should *appear* to be so, is to do that which is really shameful, in order to avoid Disgrace: It is, in the present Case, to omit doing that which is most reasonable and becoming us, in order to avoid the Censures of those, whose Censures ought to be despised, when put in the Ballance with our Duty and Obligations, as Christians: It is the very Crime the Apostle condemns, of *loving the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God*; [John xii. 43.] and something so very near akin to being *ashamed of our Saviour and his Words*, that it will not be easy to distinguish the one from the other. For what less is the being

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ashamed

ashamed of the publick Practice of that Piety, or of any of those Duties, which his Religion enjoins? And how can such Persons avoid expecting to have their Share in that eternal Infamy, which shall befall those of whom He has declared, He will be ashamed, when He cometh in the Glory of His Father, with the holy Angels. Mark viii. 38.

If then you have not already begun this Worship of God in your Houses, let it be a sufficient Inducement to you immediately to set about it, to reflect, that Piety towards God will, in all Likelihood, by this Means strike deep Root in your own Minds, and in the Minds of your Children, Servants, and Dependants; and will not only be attended with the Blessings of Pardon and Peace in your Souls, but also with the Evidences of it's being implanted therein, by producing the Fruits of Justice, Temperance, Charity, Humility, and Industry. For true Piety, as I before observed, is the Source of every Virtue. Each common Day, as it will bring it's Toils and it's Business of a worldly Kind along with it, will thus bring also a Set of religious Thoughts, encouraging Industry, and an enlivening Hope of good Success in your Labours, and Endeavours to acquire the Necessaries, and Conveniences of this Life.

WHICH Labours and Endeavours, in an *industrious* following *Of Labour* your worldly Callings, if sanctified *and Industry.* by Prayer, and a Dependence on God's Providence for his Blessing thereon, may yet be deemed a genuine Effect of true Godliness;

ness; inasmuch as a contrary Behaviour is branded by the Apostle, with a most reproachful Mark of Infamy. For as he commanded the *Theſſalonians* to work, that they might eat their own Bread; so, in his Epistle to *Timothy*, he speaks with great Indignation against those, who, through their Idleness, suffer their Families to want what is needful for them; affirming, that if any provide not for his own Household, he has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel. 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. 1 Tim. v. 8. Let it therefore be esteemed your Duty to attend diligently to the Provision you are to make for your own Subsistence, and that of your Families, by industrious Labour: Let this be esteemed as much your Duty on the *other Days* of the Week, as religious Exercises are on the *Lord's Day*. I do not mean, that Works of *Piety*, in the strictest Sense of that Word, such as Prayer, or hearing and reading the Word of God, are to be neglected on the *Week-Days*, when Opportunities offer, and Time may be obtained from your other needful Employments for that End: Certainly they ought not. But I would have you withal persuaded, that you are doing your Duty, whilst you are following your worldly Business;—and that you are guilty of a very great Sin, if you suffer yourselves to be diverted from it, by any Suggestions which should lead you to think, that you are not then *ſerving God*. For what is *ſerving God*, if doing our Duty in that State of Life unto which He has called us, is not?

THAT some well-meaning Christians have conceived otherwise of this Matter, may probably have arisen from those Passages of Scripture, wherein all Care and Concern for earthly Things seem to be condemned. As where our Saviour commands his Disciples to *take no Thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed.* Matth. vi. 31. But as the Greek Words here rendered *, *Take no Thought*, signify, Be not *anxiously*, or *solicitously careful*, so St Luke acquaints us, that our Lord Himself gave this Interpretation thereof, in his Delivery of the like Precept, (*Luke xii. 29.*) when to his Command of, *Seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink*, He added, *Neither be ye of doubtful Mind*: That is, so as to distrust the Kindness of God's Providence, in prospering that Labour which He has, in the ordinary Course of Things, made necessary to the obtaining Things needful for the Body.

So that these, and the like Passages of Scripture, only condemn that *Solicitude* and *Anxiety* about earthly Things, to which we are indeed prone; but which should be restrained by such Considerations as these,—that the Fruits of the Earth are the Gift of God, and should be acknowledged as his *Blessing* on our *Labour and Industry*;—which *Labour and Industry* will be employed to no real or lasting Advantage to us, without his *Blessing*, who *giveth us all Things*, as the Apostle says,

* Μη μετειρήνητε.

richly

richly to enjoy. 1 Tim. vi. 17. His *Blessing* on our Labours, and his *Favour* accompanying the Enjoyments of this Life, are indeed the only true and valuable Riches. And a full Persuasion hereof, is the best and most effectual Means of expelling from our Minds that *Doubtfulness*, or *Distrust*, which our Saviour justly condemns, as being most contrary to every Thing which can be called a virtuous or religious Dependence on God's Providence, for our Maintenance and Support in this Life: Which Maintenance and Support it would be just as presumptuous, and sinful, to expect, without the Use of our own Labour, as it would be profane and ungodly to expect it *merely* from that Labour we employ, and ought to employ, in obtaining it.

NEITHER is such Labour in providing Things *needful for the Body*, by any Means inconsistent with an Attention to our spiritual Concerns: It is no Ways inconsistent with *Prayer*, or with *religious Contemplation*. For what, but a Mind wholly intent on earthly Things, should hinder the Husbandman or the Labourer, when at his Work, from sometimes lifting up his Soul unto God in a devout *Ejaculation*, or *short Prayer*, for a Divine Blessing on the Labour of his Hands, or for God's preventing and restraining Grace, to keep him from the Evil of any Sin to which he may be tempted? Or what should hinder us from thinking, that such *short Petitions* will be as acceptable at the Throne of Grace, as the *longer Prayers* of those, who have Time to retire to their Chambers.

30 *Of Religious Contemplation.*

or Closets? Certainly no good Reason can be given; why they should not be equally acceptable to that God, who seeth and knoweth the Hearts of all Men; and requires no more from any one, than in Proportion to the Time and Abilities He has given for performing it.

THUS as *Prayer* may be made *Of Religious* use of by the labouring Man, even *Contemplation*. when engaged in his daily Labour; so may *religious Contemplation* likewise on the Works and Word of God. The Things with which he most converses, which he has always before him, and wherein he has his daily Employment, suggest a most obvious and important *Truth*, that of the *Providence* of God, in the Care of his Creatures in this Life:—A *Truth* frequently taught in Scripture, and exemplified in the several Species of Animals and Vegetables, much inferior to Man. To this Purpose is that Divine Reasoning of our blessed Lord—*If God so clothe the Grass of the Field, if He so feeds the Fowls the Air, as we see He does; Are not we much better than they? Shall He not therefore much more clothe us? Matth. vi. 26, 30. Are we not much better than they?* That is,—are we not created with more excellent Natures?—are we not Beings of an higher Order, than the Plants of the Earth, or the Beasts of the Field? And if it is reasonable to think, that God's Care and Preservation of all his Creatures should be in some Proportion to their Worth and Value, the Countryman has then, from viewing the Things
with

with which he is surrounded, an Argument, and Proof before his Eyes, [no Ways difficult to be made the frequent Subject of his Thoughts] that the Mercy of God is over all his Works, that the Maker of all Things is careful of the Works of his Hands; particularly of Man, the most noble of his Productions in this lower World.

AND as we are taught likewise from the Word of God, not only that the Things which are necessary for the Support of this present Life are ministred to us from our merciful Creator, but that we are made also for another Life, which is to have no End; so the Husbandman is frequently reminded of that awful Day, when he shall rise again with his Body, to live for ever. Of this the *Corn* he sows affords him a *visible Emblem* and *Memorial*; and it may well be expected, it should often put him in Remembrance thereof: It being from hence St *Paul* illustrates the Christian Doctrine of the *Resurrection* of our Bodies. (1 Cor. xv.) And how can it be possible to be reminded, in so *lively a Manner* of this, without some suitable Reflexions on that great Event, which is immediately to follow it: I mean, that *general Judgment* which will ensue; wherein *every one* shall receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad? 2. Cor. v. 10. And how can you think of that great Day of Recompence, and not allow it to have it's proper Influence on your present Behaviour? I imagine it would be natural enough for each of you to reason on this Subject in the following

ing Manner, viz. "Seeing that thus it must be,
 " that I shall put off this my Body by Death, to
 " no other End, than as the Seed I sow divests
 " it's present Form, dying only to minister to a
 " new Birth, that it may rise again, *what Manner*
 " *of Person* should this persuade me to be, in all
 " *holy Conversation and Godliness,* (2 Pet. iii. 11.)
 " *looking for that Day of God, wherein He will*
 " *render to every Man according to his Works.*"
 May it not well be expected, that something like this
 should frequently occur to the Husbandman's Mind,
 and occasion Reflexions therein like those I have
 here mentioned? And who that bestows a single
 Thought on this great End of our Being, but
 must see the infinite Folly of all Sin and Wicked-
 ness, which has such unspeakable *Misery* attend-
 ing it, as everlasting Punishment in *another World*,
 which is the Wages of Unrighteousness in *this*?
 Or who can be unwilling to live a sober, righte-
 ous, and godly Life, when such Happiness here-
 after, we are assured, shall be the Reward there-
 of, as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither*
hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive
 it? 1 Cor. ii. 9. How *tasteless* and *joyless* must
 every Thing appear to the Man who is persuaded,
 that the Pleasure it offers must cost him such an
 immense Price, as the Peace of his Conscience, and
 the Favour of his God, and expose him to the
 Danger of eternal Perdition in another Life? Can
 it possibly be esteemed an hard Service, to do al-
 ways that which is lawful and right; to live in
 the Fear of God, to resist the Temptations to
 Fraud.

Fraud and Intemperance, to *do justly*, to *love Mercy*, and to *walk humbly with our God*? How can any of these Things appear hard or unreasonable? Or if we should find no small Difficulty in subduing our sensual Appetites, and overcoming the Temptations we meet with, can we refuse to submit to our Duty herein, when we consider, that Peace of Conscience in *this* Life, and everlasting Happiness in *the other*, are the promised and glorious Rewards set before us?

THUS I have endeavoured to shew the Importance and Advantage of religious Consideration; and withal, how the great Things of God's Law, the main Parts of our Duty, as well as the mighty Rewards of well-doing, lie open to the Contemplation of all Persons, who chuse to make them the Subjects of their Thoughts and Reflexions.

AND as our Duty is no where else so perfectly taught, as in the sacred Scriptures of the Gospel, nor any where else so strongly recommended to our Practice, it becomes
Of reading the holy Scriptures.
Matter of indispensable Obligation, and most necessary to all the Purposes of a good and holy Life, that we be frequent in *reading the holy Scriptures*; which, in every Thing necessary for all Persons to understand, are intelligible to all. I heartily wish there was not such Occasion for Admonition in this particular, as I apprehend, and am certain, there is. Alas! who shall sufficiently lament the grievous Neglect and Disuse of those *lively Oracles*, as the Scriptures are most justly stiled; [*Acts*vii.
38.]

34 *Of reading the holy Scriptures.*

38.] which are *seldom* looked into by Multitudes, and by great Numbers of those, who yet call themselves Christians, are *never* consulted. Of all the Omissions of our Duty, this surely must be deemed one of the most scandalous, especially in a *Christian* and *Protestant* Country; where our Liberty in this Respect is indeed our Boast, and would be our Glory, if we made that Use of it which we ought. But as this is not the Case of those I am speaking of, so their Condition may with great Truth be said to be worse, as it renders them more culpable, than the Condition of those with whom the Bible is locked up in an *unknown Tongue*, or who with Difficulty obtain a Licence to read it in *their own*. May not this Disregard to the holy Scriptures be justly called a contemptuous Neglect of the Word of God? Is it not forsaking *the Fountain of living Waters*, and tempting Providence to deliver us up to be taught by lying Legends, and to drink only at the *putrid Streams* of Popish Traditions? For the averting which Calamity, and the gaining a more perfect Understanding of the Laws of God, I have hereto added some *Directions* to those Portions of holy Scripture, which are of more especial Concernment to you to become acquainted with. Those which the *Psalmist* calls, *the wondrous Things of God's Law*, will hereby be laid before you, and merit your Admiration. And as you will hereby gain, I hope, a deep and lasting Sense of God's perfect Hatred of Iniquity, and his Love of Righteousness and true Holiness; so you will hereby, I trust,

trust, confirm your Faith in the Promises of God to a Life of Virtue, and in his Threatnings against all Continuance in Sin. For *Faith*, the Apostle assures us, (*Rom. x. 17.*) *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*; that is, such hearing as begetteth Faith cometh by the Word of God.

NEITHER should it seem strange, that the Will of God, which was revealed that it might be believed, should have a peculiar Aptitude or Fitness to this End, of gaining Belief; since the Excellency of the Subjects treated of therein, and the Excellency of the Manner of their Delivery, give that *internal Evidence* of their Divine Original, which cannot easily be withstood, and which therefore, since the ceasing of Miracles, is one of the most considerable of those Proofs, which may be said to be adapted to the Capacities of the unlearned: Not to say, that the Promise of the Help of God's Spirit is made good to those, who faithfully use these Means of his Provision. So that those among you, who neglect reading the Scriptures, do wilfully refuse the Advantage of that *Evidence*, which the Scriptures themselves afford, of their being the Word of God; and are in the greatest Danger of falling into a most deplorable State of *Infidelity*.

LASTLY, as a Fruit of your Faith in *Christ*, and Love to God; and as a Means of promoting Holiness in your own Persons, and in your Families, encourage by your Example

Of receiving
the Sacrament
of the Lord's
Supper.

Example and Admonition, the *receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, as often as Invitation is given you thereto. Be ever mindful of the Precept of our Lord and Saviour, which commands us to receive this Sacrament *in Remembrance* of Him, *Luke xxii. 19*; and of the Advice of *St Paul*, which directs us to the Manner of receiving it as we ought, by *examining ourselves* before we partake thereof. *1 Cor. xi. 28*. In which Precept of the Apostle, and in that Behaviour which will be a natural Consequence of obeying it, is contained all that is necessary to a right Performance of this Duty; the due Discharge whereof is of very great Moment to your Improvement in Holiness; as will easily appear, if you consider, what is meant by the *Examination* commanded before we *eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, together with the Benefits assigned, by the same Apostle, to a due partaking thereof.

1st, As to the *Examination* of ourselves, before we partake of this Sacrament, it will not be doubted, that it is of the religious Kind; and therefore an Examination into our spiritual State, or the Condition of our Souls. And if such is the Examination which is commanded before we receive this Sacrament, then it cannot fail, if we thus examine ourselves *honestly and truly*, of discovering to us wherein we have transgressed the Laws of God, nor of making us sensible, at the same Time, of the Want we are in of Forgiveness, nor of exciting us to seek our Forgiveness by Repentance and Faith in *Christ*; which are
made

made in his Gospel the Conditions of our being at any Time pardoned and accepted. So that the Examination which is commanded is closely, you see, connected with the Practice of our Christian Duty, in the most fundamental Parts thereof; and must needs therefore very much conduce to our Advancement in Piety or Godliness. And that the receiving this Sacrament is conducive to this great End, will appear likewise,

2dly, FROM considering the Benefits which the Apostle assigns to a due Participation of it: Which Benefits are thus set forth and described by St Paul, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* As if the Apostle had said, Who can deny, that they are so? And as certainly as the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, (which is affirmed to be in this Sacrament) was intended to import some great Benefits and Advantages; so it is equally certain, those Benefits must be understood to be of the spiritual Kind, or to have relation unto our Souls. For the Words of the Apostle, speaking of a *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ* in this Sacrament, do not admit of a *literal* Sense, and must therefore be understood in a *spiritual* one. If so, then as eating and drinking, in the *common and natural Way*, tends to the Refreshment and Nourishment of our Bodies; so eating and drinking, in this *Way of our Lord's Appointment*, will conduce to the Strengthening and Refreshment of

our Souls, in the Paths of Virtue and Holiness.

THIS Benefit from receiving the Sacrament we are authorized to expect, provided we receive it with those Dispositions of Heart and Mind, which will attend a due Examination of ourselves before we go thither.

NONE indeed of the Means of Grace can mend our spiritual State, unless we use them in a proper Manner. For Instance, if we hear the Word of God preached to us, how can we be made better thereby, without a becoming *Attention* to the Preacher? And is not *Recollection* afterwards as necessary, as Attention was at the Time of hearing it? Or, if Prayer unto God is the Duty we would perform, must we not be careful, that we ask of Him *such Things only* as are agreeable to his Will, and in *such Manner* as He has prescribed?—with an Heart devoted to his Service, and with a Charity embracing all Mankind, Enemies as well as Friends. So, if we come to the holy Communion, to commemorate the Love of *Christ*, that we may be more firmly united to Him, as the Head of that Body his Church, of which we are Members, and that we may partake of that spiritual Food which He has provided for us, must it not in all Reason be expected in this Case, that we do this in that Manner which He by his Apostle has enjoined,—by so examining ourselves, as to think before-hand, what we are about to do, what Sort of Duty we are called upon to discharge, and what Affections and Dispositions

positions of Mind will best suit with the Discharge of it?

LET us then at such Times examine, how much we want the Pardon of our Sins, and an Encrease of Virtue;—whether we do sincerely and heartily desire, and can be truly thankful for, the Blessings of our Redemption,—and can confide in the Merits of *Christ* for the Conveyance of them upon our stedfast Faith, and sincere Repentance and Amendment of Life. To expect these Blessings any otherwise, is equally absurd with expecting, that the Food we eat for the Nourishment of our Bodies, should serve for that End, when we have no digestive Faculty. For as, in such Cases, what is eaten under such an ill Habit of Body, tends to the Encrease of it's Disorders; so with respect to this spiritual Food, the like Indisposition of Soul to receive, and appropriate it to it's Nourishment in Goodness, must needs render it's State worse: Just as the negligent Use, or Abuse of the other Means of Grace, such as Prayer, and hearing the Word of God, likewise do. We put ourselves thereby into such an evil State, as justly exposes us to the Displeasure and Judgments of God; which is what the Apostle may well be supposed to intend, speaking (1 Cor. xi. 29.) of those who *eat and drink Judgment* *, or *Condemnation to themselves* in this Sacrament,

* The Greek Word (1 Cor. xi. 29.) κρίμα, which in our Translation is rendered, *Damnation*, signifies,

crament, by so unworthily partaking thereof, as to make no Distinction between *that* and common Food; for which He reproves the *Corinthians*: And all Approaches thereto, by a wilful Negligence of the End or Design of this Sacrament, or irreverent Abuse thereof, are, in their several Degrees and Proportions, so many Approaches to the Guilt of those *Corinthians*.

BUT let us not imagine we can be safe in shunning *one Extream* by running into *the other*; or by passing from a prophane Abuse into a wilful Neglect of this Ordinance; as if this exposed us to less Danger, or made us less liable to the Displeasure of Almighty God. For why should a careless Performance of a known Duty be thought more criminal, than a wilful Neglect of performing it, when a fair Opportunity offers? Here is a wilful Omission of our Duty, in an Instance which

Judgment, or Condemnation. Dr *Whitby's* Comment on the Word is as follows:

“ [Κρίμα, Damnation.] The Word imports *temporal Judgments*; as where St *Peter* saith, *The Time is come ἀρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα, that Judgment must begin at the House of God*, 1 Pet. iv. 17. not *Damnation* surely: And this is certainly the Import of the Word here, (1.) Because the *Corinthians* did thus eat unworthily, and yet the Judgments inflicted on them for so doing, were only *temporal*, viz. *Weakness, Sickness, and Death*, ver. 30. (2.) Because the Reason assigned of those Judgments is, *That they might not be condemned in the other World*, or that they might not be obnoxious to Damnation, ver. 32.”

is

Of receiving the Sacrament. 41

is known and acknowledged to be our Duty : which is wilful Sinning : And does not wilful Sinning expose us to the Wrath of God, and deprive us of a Title to any just Expectations of the Mercies of the Gospel Covenant? For avoiding which deplorable State, let the Seasons that intervene betwixt your Invitation to the Lord's Supper, and the Time wherein it is administred, be made use of, in calling your past Ways to Remembrance ;—in lamenting those Offences whereof your Consciences accuse you ;—and in revolving in your Minds the incomparable Love of God, in giving our blessed Saviour to be a Propitiation for our Sins. *Herein, says St Paul, (Rom. v. 8.) God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.* If so, surely then his Love in undertaking, and thus executing the great Work of our Redemption, will for ever deserve to be most thankfully remembered by us, in this Way of his own Appointment.

FOR the Assistance of your Meditations and Devotions on this Occasion, the *Office for the Communion*; in your *Common-Prayer Books*, may be of great Service, if read over with due Attention. All the Particulars, concerning which it is needful we should examine ourselves, before we go thither, are set forth in the Exhortations *before*, and *at* the Time of receiving ; and the Mercies of our Redemption are therein described, in a Manner apt to convey the most distinct and affecting Remembrance thereof. So that whatever

42 *Of the Importance of true Godliness.*

Advantage may be expected from other Books wrote on this Subject, there cannot well be said to be any *Necessity* of your providing yourselves with any other Directions, or Helps, than those which the *Communion Service* does itself furnish to every one who is provided with a *Common-Prayer Book*. But lest it should prove too difficult for you to convert those Prayers, in the Office for the Communion, to *private*, which were made for *publick* Use, I have added two Prayers on this important Occasion, the one to be used *before*, the other *after* the Time of receiving.

I HAVE now laid before you the *Of the Importance of true Godliness.* several Particulars, at least the several great Branches, of your Duty to God, in the Practice whereof true Godliness consists: To which permit me *finally* to exhort you, from the great *Importance* of your being thus *godly* or *pious*, in order to the Discharge of your Duty in all other Respects; and from that unspeakable Happiness or Misery, to which your Piety, or your Ungodliness, in which soever you shall chuse to live *here*, will bring you *hereafter*.

THE Importance of your being truly godly or pious, in order to the Discharge of the other Parts of your Duty, may be easily discerned, by considering the *Connexion* there is between *Piety*, *Charity*, and *Sobriety*; or how naturally and easily we are led from the one to the other.

As, with Respect to *Charity*. That *Piety* which instructs us in our Duty, and gives us a deep Sense

Of the Importance of true Godliness. 43

Sense of our Obligations to our Maker, which displays the Love of God towards us in our Creation, Preservation, and Redemption, the same Piety will make it appear to us most reasonable, and what may justly be expected from us, that if God has *so loved us, we ought also to love one another*:—so to love one another, as to do all the Good we are able to our Fellow-Creatures who are *necessitous*, and who stand in the same Relation with ourselves to that glorious Being, the God and Father of us all: The Offences which they at any Time commit against us, will appear few and little, if compared with those we have committed, in our Transgressions of the Laws of God: And to ask Forgiveness of our own Sins, without a sincere Disposition and Readiness to be at Peace with those who have offended us, will appear so absurd in the Accounts of *Piety*, that if we are truly pious, we shall be so far from chusing to live at Enmity with those who discover a Readiness to be reconciled to us; that, on the contrary, we shall chearfully forgive the worst of our Enemies, however they may behave to us; seeing, whilst we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by *Christ Jesus* our Lord.

AND if *Piety* will thus become the Parent of *Charity*, by teaching us thus to behave towards those whose *Necessities* we have it in our Power to relieve, and towards those likewise who have any way *wronged* or *injured* us;—how averse will it make us to the doing any Harm to those who have done us no Wrong? How detestable will it make

44. *Of the Importance of true Godliness.*

make every Kind of Fraud and Injustice? Every Degree of that Tenderness and Benevolence, which true Piety will inspire, will prove of course a Remove, in the same Degree, from the Inclination of doing any Injury to others.

BUT this is not all. Godliness will be a Defence likewise to that Part of our Duty, more immediately relating to ourselves, which the Apostle expresses by *living soberly*. For as we are taught to live *godly* and *righteously*, so are we likewise to live *soberly*; Tit. ii. 12.—That is, to have our Passions under due Restraints; not to suffer them to carry us into Excesses of any Kind; against which we shall be well guarded by the Habits of Piety. By the frequent Exercise of Acts of Devotion, we shall raise a strong Fence against the Attacks of *Lewdness*, *Luxury*, *Gluttony*, and *Drunkenness*; not indeed a Fence which cannot be broken through, but such as when broken, we shall be most likely to become solicitous to repair, by soon returning, from the Error of those evil Ways we at any Time have unhappily trodden, into the Paths of *Truth* and *Righteousness*. By habituating our Souls to Acts of Devotion, we shall be made continually mindful, that we are *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, consecrated to the Service of God, and made accountable for all wilful Impurity; for every Thing done by us to the Disgrace and Dishonour of human Nature, and of Almighty God, whose Workmanship we are, and whom He hath both made and redeemed, that we might shew forth his Praise, by doing always

Of the Importance of true Godliness. 43

ways that which is lawful and right ;—*by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* So St *Paul* instructs us in his Epistle to *Titus* ; and at the same Time directs our View forward, to that awful Time of God's coming to Judgment ; the Prospect whereof he lays before us, as the great Motive to an holy and a godly Life. *Looking*, says the Apostle, *for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* : Tit. ii. 13. *Looking for* ; that is, expecting and depending thereon, as the great Day of Recompence ; wherein *all who* have *patiently continued in well-doing*, shall receive a Reward full of Glory and Immortality.

REMEMBER, my dear Brethren ! that this is the Christian's Faith and Hope ; wherein if you persevere steadfast unto the End, you will *naturally*, I had almost said, *necessarily*, be led to behave in such Manner, as to be made fit to be Partakers of that Happiness, which shall be the true Christian's Portion and Reward : With which think not any thing you can do, or suffer, in this Life, fit to be compared. Neither will you surely, if you consider withal, that there can be no falling short of the great Reward of well-doing, but what will be attended with a Mischief as dreadful, as the Happiness of Heaven is desirable. For, not to obtain eternal Happiness, as the Reward of our Piety and Virtue, (a *Reward* indeed of *Grace*, but not of *Debt* !) I say, to fall short of this immortal Blessedness, will not only prove the Loss of what is most worthy our Wishes, and Endeavours

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Endeavours to obtain, but will expose us to all the Evils of that everlasting Punishment, to which the *Unholy* and *Prophane*, the *Wicked* and *Ungodly* will be consigned. No Words, to this Purpose, can be of more Weight, none can more deserve your careful Remembrance, than those of our Lord and Saviour, declaring the Sentence He will pass on all Men. Read them, and may they make the deepest Impression on your Minds. *The Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment; but the Righteous into Life eternal.*

MAY it please God to prosper these my poor, but well-meant, Endeavours to promote your eternal Welfare! May you *have your Fruit unto Holiness* here, that your *End* may be *everlasting Life*! This is the most sincere Wish, and shall be the constant Prayer, of

Your most affectionate Friend,

LONDON.

26 April, 1746.

and Servant,

THO. TALBOT.

A Table of Lessons from the Holy Scriptures, for the Use of Families and single Persons; containing sundry Parts of holy Writ of most general Concernment to be known, and well remembred; which, if read every Week in the Portions placed under each Sunday, the whole may be gone through with great Ease in the Compass of a Year.

1 SUNDAY.*Genesis*, Chapters 1. 2. 3.*Psalms* 1. 2. 3.*St Matt.* Chap. 1. 2. 3. 4.2 SUNDAY.*Gen.* 17. 18. 19 to ver. 30.*Psalms* 4. 5.*St Matthew* 5. 6. 7.3 SUNDAY.*Genesis* 22 to verse 30.

24. 28. 37.

Psalms 8. 9.*St Matthew* 8. 9. 10.4 SUNDAY.*Genesis* 39. 40. 41.*Psalms* 11. 12. 13.*St Matthew* 11. 12. 13.5 SUNDAY.*Genesis* 42. 43. 44. 45.*Psalms* 15. 16. 17.*St Matthew* 14. 15. 16.6 SUNDAY.*Genesis* 47. 48. 49. 50.*Psalms* 18.*St Matthew* 17. 18. 19.7 SUNDAY.*Ex.* 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6 to v. 14.*Psalms* 19. 20. 21.*St Matthew* 20. 21. 22.8 SUNDAY.*Exodus* 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.*Psalms* 22. 23.*St Matthew* 23. 24. 25.

9 SUN-

<u>9 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Exodus</i> 12. 13. 14. <i>Psalms</i> 24. 25. <i>St Matthew</i> 26. 27. 28.	<u>17 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Deut.</i> 30. 31. 32. 34. <i>Psalms</i> 40. 41. <i>St Luke</i> 4. 5. 6.
<u>10 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Exodus</i> 15. 16. 17. 18. <i>Psalms</i> 26. 27. <i>St Mark</i> 1. 2. 3.	<u>18 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Joshua</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. <i>Psalms</i> 42. 43. <i>St Luke</i> 7. 8. 9.
<u>11 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Exodus</i> 19. 20. 23. 32. <i>Psalms</i> 28. 29. <i>St Mark</i> 4. 5. 6.	<u>19 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Joshua</i> 6. 7. 8. 23. 24. <i>Psalms</i> 46. 47. <i>St Luke</i> 10. 11. 12.
<u>12 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Levit.</i> 26. <i>Numbers</i> 16. 20. <i>Psalms</i> 30. 31. <i>St Mark</i> 7. 8. 9.	<u>20 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Judges</i> 6. 7. 14. 15. 16. <i>Psalms</i> 50. 51. <i>St Luke</i> 13. 14. 15. 16.
<u>13 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Numbers</i> 22. 23. 24. <i>Psalms</i> 32. 33. <i>St Mark</i> 10. 11. 12.	<u>21 SUNDAY.</u> <i>1 Samuel</i> 1. 3. 4. 12. 17. <i>Psalms</i> 52. 56. <i>St Luke</i> 17. 18. 19.
<u>14 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Deuteronomy</i> 1. 4. 5. 6. <i>Psalms</i> 34. 35. <i>St Mark</i> 13. 14.	<u>22 SUNDAY.</u> <i>1 Kings</i> 3. 8. 11. 12. 13. <i>Psalms</i> 57. 61. <i>St Luke</i> 20. 21.
<u>15 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Deuteronomy</i> 7. 8. 9. 10. <i>Psalms</i> 36. 37. <i>St Mark</i> 15. 16.	<u>23 SUNDAY.</u> <i>1 Kings</i> 14. 17. 18. 19. <i>Psalms</i> 62. 63. <i>St Luke</i> 22. 23. 24.
<u>16 SUNDAY.</u> <i>Deut.</i> 11. 17. 28. 29. <i>Psalms</i> 38. 39. <i>St Luke</i> 1. 2. 3 to ver. 23.	<u>24 SUNDAY.</u> <i>1 Kings</i> 21. 22. <i>2 Kings</i> 1. 2. <i>Psalms</i> 64. 65. <i>St John</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 25 SUN-

25 SUNDAY.

2 Kings 4. 5. 6. 7.
Psalms 66. 67.
St John 5. 6. 7.

26 SUNDAY.

2 Kings 9. 18. 19. 20. 22.
Psalms 71. 72.
St John 8. 9. 10.

27 SUNDAY.

Ezra 1. 3. 9.
Psalms 77. 78.
St John 11. 12. 13.

28 SUNDAY.

Nehemiah 1. 2. 9.
Psalms 84. 86.
St John 14. 15. 16. 17.

29 SUNDAY.

Esther 1. 2. 3. 4.
Psalms 91. 92.
St John 18. 19. 20. 21.

30 SUNDAY.

Esther 5. 6. 7. 8.
Psalms 93. 94.
Acts 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

31 SUNDAY.

Proverbs 1. 2. 3. 4.
Psalms 95. 96.
Acts 6. 7. 8.

32 SUNDAY.

Proverbs 8. 10. 11. 12.
Psalms 97. 98.
Acts 9. 10. 11.

33 SUNDAY.

Proverbs 13. 14. 15. 16.
Psalms 99. 100.
Acts 12. 13. 14.

34 SUNDAY.

Proverbs 17. 24. 28.
Psalms 101. 102.
Acts 15. 16. 17.

35 SUNDAY.

Isaiah 1. 5. 6. 7 to ver. 17.
Psalm 103.
Acts 18. 19. 20.

36 SUNDAY.

Is. 1 to v. 10. chap. 25. 26.
Psalm 104.
Acts 21. 22. 23.

37 SUNDAY.

Isaiah 44. 45. 48. 49.
Psalms 105. 106.
Acts 24. 25. 26.

38 SUNDAY.

Isaiah 50. 51. 52. 53.
Psalms 111. 112.
Acts 27. 28.

39 SUNDAY.

Isaiah 55. 56. 58.
Psalms 113. 116. 117.
Romans 1. 2. 5. 6.

40 SUNDAY.

Isaiah 59. 60. 61.
Psalm 118.
Romans 8. 12. 13. 15. 16.

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41 SUN

41 SUNDAY.

Jerem. 5. 9. 10 to ver. 17.
Psal 119 to verse 49.
1 Corinthians 10. 11 from
 ver. 17 to the End. 13. 15.

42 SUNDAY.

Jeremiah 14. 22. 23.
Psal 119 to verse 89.
2 Cor. 4. 5. *Galatians* 5. 6.

43 SUNDAY.

Jeremiah 25. 26. 27.
Psal 119 from verse 89
 to verse 137.
Ephesians 4. 5. 6.

44 SUNDAY.

Jeremiah 32. 36. 37.
Psal 119 from ver. 137
 to the End.
Epist. to *Philip.* *Coloss.* 3.

45 SUNDAY.

Jeremiah 38. 39. 50.
Psalms 121. 122. 123.
1 Theff. 4. 5. | *2 Theff.* 1. 3.

46 SUNDAY.

Jeremiah 51. 52.
Psalms 124. 125. 126.
1 Tim. 1. 2. 6. | *2 Tim.* 1. 3.
Titus 2. 3.

47 SUNDAY.

Ezekiel 18. *Daniel* 1. 2.
Psal. 130. 131. 133. 135.
Hebrews 1. 2. 3. 11.
 12. 13.

48 SUNDAY.

Daniel 3. 4. 5. 6.
Psalms 136. 138.
Epistle of St James.

49 SUNDAY.

Daniel 9. *Joel* 2. *A-*
mos 5.
Psalms 139. 142.
First Epistle of St Peter.

50 SUNDAY.

Jonah 1. 2. 3. *Micah.* 6.
Psalms 143. 144.
2 Peter 1. 3. | *1 John* 1.
 2. 3.

51 SUNDAY.

Haggai 1. 2. *Zech.* 7. 8.
Psalms 145. 146. 147.
1 John. 4. 5. *Epistle of*
St Jude.

52 SUNDAY.

Malachi 1. 3. 4.
Psalms 148. 150.
Revelation 1. 2. 3. 22.

*A Table of some select Portions of the
Psalms, which may be sung in Families on
the Lord's Day, or at other Times, as Op-
portunity offers.*

<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Verses</i>	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Verses</i>
1	1, 2, 3, 4.	73	23, 24, 25, 26.
3	4, 5, 6, 7.	77	11, 12, 13, 14.
8	3, 4, 5, 6.	89	5, 6, 7, 8.
15	1, 2, 3, 4.	92	1, 2, 3, 4.
22	23, 24, 25.	96	12, 13, 14.
24	7, 8, 9, 10.	98	3, 4, 5, 6.
28	6, 7, 8, 9.	100	— — —
29	1, 2, 3.	101	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
34	1, 2, 3, 4.	103	1, 2, 3, 4.
34	6, 7, 8, 9.	103	8, 9, 10, 11.
37	23, 24, 25, 26.	103	19, 20, 21, 22.
39	5, 6, 7, 8.	105	1, 2, 3.
41	1, 2, 3.	108	1, 2, 3, 4.
43	3, 4, 5, 6.	116	10, 11, 12.
44	1, 2, 3.	117	— — —
57	9, 10, 11, 12.	119	140, 141, 142.
61	3, 4, 5.	119	164, 165, 166, 167.
65	1, 2, 3, 4.	134	— — —
67	3, 4, 5, 6.	138	1, 2, 3.
68	1, 2, 3, 4.	146	1, 2, 3, 4.
71	3, 4, 5, 6.	149	1, 2, 3, 4.

*Some Forms of Prayer for the Use
of Families, and for the more retired
Devotion of the Closet.*

*A Prayer for the Use of a Family, on the
Lord's Day.*

LMIGHTY and most merciful Father, our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, who hast made the World, and all Things therein, and who only hast the Power of supplying all the various Wants and Necessities of thy Creatures; we become humble Petitioners unto Thee, for the Things needful for our Souls and Bodies; especially for the Pardon of our Sins, of our manifold Transgressions of thy Commandments. Let thy Mercy, O Lord, be magnified in our Forgiveness: For Thou art a merciful God, having spared us often, when we deserved Punishment, that by thy Goodness we might be led to Repentance.

O!

A Family Prayer for the Lord's Day. 53

O! may thy gracious Forbearance of us hitherto have it's intended Effect, and make us truly penitent, by the Amendment of our Ways and our Doings; which we beg, thro' the Mediation of thy Son *Jesus Christ* our LORD:

IN whose Name we offer up our Prayers for the whole Race of Mankind. Let thy Ways be known upon Earth, and thy saving Health among all Nations. Water, we beseech Thee, with the Dew of thy heavenly Blessing, the Labours of all those, who are employed in spreading the Knowledge of thy Gospel, throughout the World: And grant, that all who have given in their Names to *Christ*, may depart from Iniquity. Bless all Orders and Degrees of Men among us; more especially thy Servant, our Sovereign King GEORGE, and all who are in Authority under him. Bless all our spiritual Pastors: Grant that they may diligently and faithfully preach thy holy Word, and that those committed to their Charge, may obediently follow the same. Comfort, O LORD, and heal the Sick, support the Weak; vouchsafe thy enlightning Grace to those that have wandered out of the Way of Truth; and thy quickning Spirit to those who are dead:

54 *A Family Prayer for the Lord's Day.*

dead in Trespases and Sins; that they may return into the Way of Righteousness. Forgive those who have at any Time injured us; make us merciful, as Thou, our Father in Heaven, art merciful; and give us, we earnestly beseech Thee, a perpetual Fear and Love of thy holy Name, with a thankful Sense of thy manifold Goodness to us, and to all Mankind.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks unto Thee, for thy manifold Mercies vouchsafed unto us, whether they relate to this Life, or a better. But above all, we adore the Greatness of thy Love to us, and to all Mankind, in sending thy only Son to be the Saviour of the World. Give us, we pray Thee, the Grace to have, on these thy Sabbaths, a devout Remembrance of the great Works of our Creation and Redemption; that when our Souls shall be separated from these Bodies, we may be removed to a perpetual Rest from all our Labours, and finally rise (at the general Resurrection of the Dead) to receive the happy Portion of thy faithful Servants, in the Kingdom of Heaven: Which we beg thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord and only Saviour; in whose
Name

A Family Prayer for Week-Days. 55

Name and Words, we conclude our Prayers, saying,

Our Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us Day by Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer which may be used on the Week-Days, in a Family subsisting by Husbandry or Labour.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast made all Men, and by thy wise Providence hast appointed them to different Stations, and Employments in this Life, we beseech Thee enable us to behave always with a thankful Submission to thy Will, in that State of Life to which thou hast called us. We humbly acknowledge, and desire to be always mindful, that we are thy Creatures, and at thy Disposal: And as Thou hast been pleased to make our Subsistence

56 *A Family Prayer for Week-Days.*

sistence here to depend on our Labour and Industry, we humbly crave thy Blessing thereon; and thy Grace, that we may not repine at this our Condition, in that we are obliged to eat the Bread of Carefulness. We confess, it is of thy undeserved Goodness, that we are permitted to enjoy any of the Comforts or Conveniencies of Life, having so often offended against thy Divine Majesty, by our Transgressions of thy holy Commandments; for which we here prostrate ourselves before Thee in all Humility of Mind, imploring thy Forgiveness of our manifold Trespases, thro' our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, *Jesus Christ*:

IN whose Name we become humble Supplicants unto Thee, not only for ourselves, but for all our Fellow-Creatures:—That they may be all brought unto the Knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and of *Jesus Christ*, whom Thou hast sent, and walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith they are called. Be especially gracious to the People of this Land: Bless the *King*, and all the Royal Family, all in civil Authority over us, and all the Ministers of thy most holy Word and Sacraments, particularly him to whom is committed the Care of
our

A Family Prayer for Week-Days. 57

our Souls : Grant that thy Work may prosper in his Hands. Extend thy Mercy to all those who are distressed in Mind, Body, or Estate : And enable us in the Time of our Health, to continue stedfast in the Faith, and to be so obedient to thy Will and Commandments, that in the Time of Sickness, and in the Hour of Death, we may not fail to put our whole Trust and Confidence in Thee. Make us continually to increase in Faith, Hope, and Charity ; nourish us, we beseech Thee, in all Goodness, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord ; in whose Name and Words we continue to call upon Thee, saying,

Our Father, which art in Heaven ; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us Day by Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers

Prayers for single Persons in Private.

For a due Frame and Temper of Mind in Prayer, with becoming Apprehensions of Almighty God, the great Object of Worship.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, the Creator of all Things, the Governor of the World, and the Judge of all Men, I thy sinful Creature fall down before thy Divine Majesty, imploring the Forgiveness of my manifold Transgressions; encouraged to pray for Pardon, and to hope for Mercy, in and thro' the Merits and Mediation of thy blessed Son, our Saviour *Jesus Christ*:—In whose Name I humbly implore the gracious Assistance of thy holy Spirit, that I may be enabled to have always in Prayer such Apprehensions of thy Greatness and Goodness, as may suit the Distance of so unworthy a Creature from Thee my Creator, and the infinite Obligations I am under, for all that I enjoy, and all that I have any Grounds to hope for. And whereas thy glorious Perfections infinitely surpass the limited Capacities of all
finite

A Morning Prayer for a Person in Private. 59

finite Beings, give me, O LORD, a true and proper Sense of my own Meanness, Weakness, and Folly, that I may think more duly of thy transcendent Wisdom, Goodness, and Power. Grant that I may be ever mindful that, during our sojourning here, it is our Duty to walk by Faith, and not by Sight; that the clear View of thy adorable Excellencies, is not to be our present Portion, but our future Reward, the Recompence of a patient Continuance in well-doing; wherein I most earnestly pray, I may be found persevering unto my Life's End, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer.

I.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve, pour down upon *me* the Abundance of thy Mercy, forgiving *me* those Things whereof *my* Conscience is afraid, and giving *me* those good Things which *I am* not worthy to ask, but thro' the Merits and
Mediation

*Collect for the
12th Sunday
after Tri-
nity.*

60 *A Morning Prayer for a Person in Private.*
Mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord.
Amen.

2.

Collect in the PREVENT me, O LORD,
Communion in all my Doings with thy most
Service, gracious Favour, and further
me with thy continual Help,
that in all my Works begun, continued, and
ended in Thee, I may glorify thy holy
Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain
everlasting Life, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord.
Amen.

3.

WITH these my Prayers accept, I be-
seech Thee, my most humble Thanksgivings,
for thy manifold loving Kindness vouchsafed
unto me. Thy Mercies are renewed to us
every Morning, and every Moment of our
Lives: Grant that I may ever be most thank-
fully mindful thereof; and enable me by the
Grace of thy holy Spirit, to dedicate my
Life, which is thy Gift, and at thy Dispo-
sal, to Thee and thy Service: That when I
shall be summoned to give an Account of
all my Deeds done in the Body, I may be
adjudged meet to be an Inheritor of thine
everlasting

An Evening Prayer for a Person in Private. 61
everlasting Kingdom, thro' Jesus Christ our
Saviour. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful
Father, who only hast the Power to pro-
tect us from all Things hurtful, and to give
us those Things which are profitable for us,
vouchsafe me, I beseech Thee, a lively and
dutiful Sense of my continual Dependence
on thy Divine Power and Goodness, and an
heartly Sorrow for all those Transgressions
of thy holy Will and Commandments,
of which I have been guilty, either in
Thought, Word, or Deed; and assist me
with thy Grace, that I may avoid committing
the like Offences for the future. Continue,
O LORD, thy Mercies to me, when I sleep,
and am most defenceless; and be thou pleased
to protect and defend me against all the
Perils and Dangers of this Night. Let
Sleep, which is the Image of Death, make
me mindful of that Time, when I must
make my Bed in the Grave; and of that
Time when I shall rise from thence to a
Life of endless Happiness or Misery. I
believe, O LORD, that Thou wilt be the
G Judge

Judge of all Men, and that Thou beholdest all our Ways and our Doings, however we may seek to hide them, and with what Secrecy soever they may be conducted by us. For the Darkneſs is no Darkneſs with Thee, but the *Night* is as clear as the *Day*. Let me never therefore be ſo vain, 'as to think of doing any Thing which may eſcape thy Obſervance, or the Sentence of thy righteous Judgment: In an holy Expectation whereof grant that I may live and die, thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, in whoſe Name and Words I further call upon Thee, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Humility.

O MOST mighty and moſt merciful GOD, the Giver of all good Things, in whom we live, and move, and have our Being, vouchſafe me the Grace to acknowledge, that thy Favour and Bounty are the only Source of thoſe Bleſſings I enjoy, and of thoſe which I have yet to hope for. Let a thorough and habitual Perſuaſion hereof preſerve me always from the Folly and Wickedneſs of Pride. Give me a deep Senſe, that I have not uſed the Means and
Oppor-

A Prayer for the Fear of God. 63

Opportunities of knowing, and obeying thy Will, in such Manner as I ought to have done; and as a Sinner have the justest Reason, with all Humility of Mind, to implore thy Forgiveness; which I most humbly beg, thro' thy blessed Son, *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Fear of God.

O MOST mighty God! whose Power none can resist, whose Indignation none can withstand, make me to have always such a Fear of thy Divine Majesty, as may prevent my acting, at any Time, in Disobedience to thy Will. Let not thy Mercy, O LORD, in forgiving those who truly turn to Thee, make me unmindful, that by sinning against Thee, we provoke thy Displeasure, earn the sad Wages of Iniquity, and may justly be permitted to perish in our Wickedness. Under all the Temptations I meet with in this Life to transgress thy Commandments, vouchsafe me the Grace to remember always the Punishment due to Sin; that the Loss of thy Favour, which is better than Life itself, is threatned there-to; and that such Misery as will make the

64 *A Prayer in Time of Sicknefs.*

future Life a Burthen, and a Torment, will be the Portion of impenitent Sinners. O may the Fear and Love of thy holy Name sweetly combine, in keeping me stedfastly obedient to thy Will! And grant, that I may so fear Thee in this Life, that thy Mercy may be my Sanctuary, and sure Refuge in that which is to come, thro' *Jefus Chrift* our Lord. *Amen.*

In Time of Sicknefs.

MERCIFUL LORD, who vifiteft us with Sicknefs and Afflictions, that we may be mindful, how fleeting the Enjoyments, how uncertain the Term, and Continuance of this Life are, and to reduce us to a better Sense of our Duty to Thee, and the Concerns of Eternity; I thy finful Creature bow down myself before Thee, acknowledging thy great and manifold Mercies, and imploring thy Forgiveness for my not having made that due and religious Use of them, which might juftly have been expected. Be gracious, O LORD, in pardoning the Sins of thy Servant, and grant that my future Behaviour, if it fhall please Thee to reftore me to Health, may give acceptable

A Thanksgiving for Recovery from Sicknefs. 65

ble Proofs of my true and sincere Repen-
tance. Vouchsafe Succes to the Means used
for my Recovery. But if in thy Providence
thou shalt see fit to order it otherwise, let
my Patience and Resignation to thy Divine
Will, as they are exercised by this Illness,
be improved thereby; and grant that I may
finish my Course with Joy, by having gain-
ed, thro' the Assistance of thy Grace, an
holy and fit Disposition to leave this transi-
tory State, for my eternal Home, in that
blessed Place, where the Souls of the Faith-
ful have an everlasting Deliverance from
Pain and Sicknefs, and a perpetual Rest
from all their Labours: Which I humbly
beg, thro' the Mediation of thy dear Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord; in whose Name and
Words I further call upon Thee, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Thanksgiving for Recovery.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful
Father, from whom alone proceed
the Issues of Life and Death, I thy unwor-
thy Servant most humbly acknowledge with
all Thankfulness, that it is of thy gracious
Goodness I am made able, at this Time, to

66 *A Thanksgiving for Recovery from Sickness.*

utter my Praises and Thanksgivings for thy late Mercy vouchsafed unto me, in restoring my Health, and renewing my Strength, and making me hear again the Voice of Joy and Gladness. Blessed be thy holy Name, for putting at this Time a new Song into my Mouth, even a Thanksgiving unto Thee my God. Grant me, I beseech Thee, a perpetual Remembrance of this thy loving Kindness: And as thou hast hereby been pleased to allow me more Time, for giving Proof of my Readiness to obey thy Will, that I may work out my Salvation; grant that I may account this the great Business of Life, the one Thing needful: That when the Time shall come for my Departure hence, I may be found acceptable in thy Sight, and enter into that happy State, which Thou hast promised to all those, who walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith they are called.—In which Number of faithful and virtuous Souls grant, O LORD, I may be found, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Saviour; in whose Name and Words I continue to call upon Thee, saying,

Our Father, &c.

For

For FAITH.

O ALMIGHTY God, and most merciful Father, who hast made the World and all Things therein, and hast given unto Man a Soul capable of knowing Thee, the only true God, and *Jesus Christ*, whom Thou hast sent, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind, enable me, I beseech Thee, by the Assistance of thy holy Spirit, to believe in Thee as I ought, and to obey Thee always as thou hast commanded. Let nothing subvert or impair my firm Belief of the Truths of thy Gospel; nor any Temptations to think or act contrary thereto, have any other Effect, than to make me watchful, and careful to strengthen my Faith, by a devout and frequent Application unto Thee, for the Succours of thy Grace; without which I am deeply sensible we can neither believe, nor do as we ought, however great the Evidence of our holy Religion is, how strong soever it's Obligations are. In the Belief whertof, and a dutiful Obedience to thy most holy Will, as revealed to us by thy blessed Son, grant that
I may

68 *A Prayer for Diligence and Industry.*

I may faithfully persevere unto my Life's End, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

For Diligence and Industry in any honest worldly Calling.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, the Creator and Preserver of all Men, I thy Creature prostrate myself before thy Divine Majesty, desiring, with all possible Humility, to confess the Justice of thy Will, in making the sinful Race of our first sinful Parents subject to a Life of various Necessities, not to be supplied without Toil and Labour, Diligence and Industry, in those several Callings to which, by the Allotment of thy Providence, we are appointed. Vouchsafe me the Grace to attend, with a virtuous Application, to the Work and Business of that Station, in which thou hast placed me. Thou, O LORD, knowest best, Thou only knowest what is fitting and convenient for me: To Thee therefore I desire cheerfully to submit the Disposal of myself, and my State and Condition here. Grant that I may be content to eat the Bread of Carefulness with Thanksgiving, and that at length in thy good Time, after a patient Continuance in well-

A Prayer before receiving the Sacrament. 69
well-doing, I may be removed to the happy
Abode of thy faithful Servants in Heaven,
thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

*A Prayer which may be used in Private,
before receiving the Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper.*

ALMIGHTY and ever-
lasting God, who art al-
ways more ready to hear, than
we to pray, and art wont to
give more than either we desire or deserve;
pour down upon *me* the Abundance of thy
Mercy, forgiving *me* those Things whereof
my Conscience is afraid, and giving *me* those
good Things which *I am* not worthy to ask,
but thro' the Merits and Mediation of thy
Son, *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

*Collect on the
12th Sunday
after Trinity.*

In whose Name, and for whose Sake, I
most humbly beseech thy Divine Majesty to
hear these my Prayers, and to pardon all
my Transgressions, thro' the Merits of the
Death of *Christ*; for the more especial Re-
membrance whereof, our Lord *Jesus Christ*
appointed that Sacrament, of which I am
now

70 *A Prayer after receiving the Sacrament.*

now about to partake. Vouchsafe me, I beseech Thee, thy Grace, that I may be truly penitent for my past Sins, have a lively Faith in thy Mercy thro' *Christ*, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men; and that I may be truly careful to perform those Vows of Obedience to thy holy Will and Commandments, which I am about to renew at thy holy Table; that from a devout Remembrance of thy Mercies on Earth, I may at length be removed to the everlasting Enjoyment of thy Kingdom in Heaven, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord: In whose Name and Words I offer up these my Prayers, saying, *Our Father, &c.*

After having received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the Evening of the same Day, may be offered up the following Prayer and Thanksgiving.

Collect in the Communion Service. **P**REVENT me, O LORD, in all my Doings, with thy most gracious Favour, and further me with thy continual Help, that in all my Works begun, continued,

A Prayer after receiving the Sacrament. 71

rued, and ended in Thee, *I* may glorify thy holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain everlasting Life, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord:

IN whose Name, and thro' whose Mediation, I beseech Thee to accept my most humble Thanksgivings for all thy Mercies vouchsafed unto me, whether they relate to this Life, or a better: But in a more especial Manner I desire, at this Time, to laud and magnify thy holy Name, for thy wonderful Love, in sending thy Son to be the Saviour of Mankind. And as I have this Day been a Partaker of that Sacrament, which he appointed for the solemn Remembrance of his Death; grant, O LORD, that I may obtain a lively Remembrance of his Love and gracious Condescension, and of the Benefits which all penitent Sinners, having their Trust and Confidence therein, derive from thence: Of which Benefits make me a Partaker, by true Repentance and Faith in *Christ*. These, I believe, are the Terms of our Acceptance with Thee; with these I have this Day solemnly engaged to comply; and earnestly pray for thy Grace, to enable me to bring this Resolution into Practice, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord;

72 *A Prayer for a Spirit of Peace and Charity.*

Lord; in whose Name and Words I offer up these my Prayers and Praises unto Thee, saying,
Our Father, &c.

For a Spirit of Peace and Charity.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father! the God of Peace and Love, incline me, by the Grace of thy holy Spirit, to follow always the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edify another. Heal, O LORD, the unhappy Dissentions which have arisen among Christians, to the Reproach of our most holy Religion amongst Unbelievers, and to the Breach of that Charity which our blessed Saviour has made the distinguishing Mark of his Disciples. Our merciful and faithful High Priest knoweth, we are assured, how to have Compassion on those who are ignorant, and out of the Way. Vouchsafe unto all Christians the like compassionate Spirit towards those who have erred, or are supposed to have erred, from the Way of Truth: And grant us such a Disposition of Mind,

A Prayer for a Spirit of Peace and Charity. 73.

as may incline us always to be ready to receive that Light, which shall at any Time be offered for the Correction of our Judgments, in Matters pertaining to our Duty. Let not Arrogance, or Self-conceit, make me imperiously require from others Conformity to my Sentiments; nor an unreasonable Stiffness or Obstinacy, render me averse to the Opinions of others. Enable me carefully to examine without Partiality, or Prejudice, whatever Claims my Regard, either with respect to my Faith, or Practice; that when I shall be called to give an Account of the Exercise of my Understanding, and the Determinations of my Will, I may be acquitted before thy great Tribunal, as having behaved suitably to the Rank and Order of reasonable Creatures, in which Thou hast placed me; and with that Humanity, which is required from those who are Fellow-Members of the same Body, and as such, obliged to have the same Love one towards another. Take away from us, O LORD, all Hatred, Variance, and Strife, with whatever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord. Forgive all those who, without any just Cause, are mine Enemies, and grant that, after the Example of

H

thy

A Prayer for Grace to improve Time.
thy Goodness, I may be kind to the Un-
thankful and the Evil, that so I may approve
myself, to be one of thy Children, and may
be accepted and rewarded by Thee my hea-
venly Father, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord.
Amen.

*A Prayer for Grace to make a good Use
of Time: [Which may be proper up-
on any one's Birth-Day.]*

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful
Father! the Author of my Being,
and my most gracious Preserver hitherto,
from the many Dangers to which I am con-
tinually exposed, vouchsafe me the Grace to
be always mindful, that the farther I ad-
vance in Years, and the more Time Thou
allowest for my sojourning here, the more I
shall have to give an Account of to Thee
hereafter. Pardon, O LORD, my past
Transgressions, in having wasted in Idleness,
or vain Pursuits, those Hours wherein I
might, and ought to have served to thy
Glory, by doing good in my Generation:
And grant I may make so good an Use of
the

A Prayer for Grace to improve Time. 75

the Days or Years Thou shalt please to add unto my Life, in this transitory State, that when I shall be summoned to leave this World, I may be meet to be a Partaker of that eternal Inheritance, which Thou hast promised to all thy faithful Servants, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

Errors of the Press, which the Reader is desired to correct.

Page 2. Line 28. read, *his* Creatures. p. 9. l. 10. r. being *commanded*. l. 21. r. *as* his Church. p. 11. l. 2. r. setting it apart. p. 13. l. 23. r. *remembering*. p. 26. l. 32. r. *may be justly deemed the genuine Effects*. p. 28. l. 16. r. *distrust*. p. 30. l. 22. r. *Fowls of the Air*. l. 31. blot out *some*. p. 35. l. 9. r. *Word of God*.

Your Christian Love, Amen
 promised to all thy faithful servants, that
 that eternal inheritance, which Thou hast
 World, I may be meet to be a Partaker of
 when I shall be summoned to leave this
 unto my life; in this transient State, that
 the Blessings of Thy Love shall be made to all

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